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MUSIC IN THE BLOOD, 4 | HOLIDAY LIFE, 23 | SLICE OF LIFE, 46

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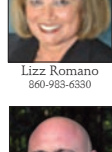
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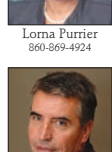
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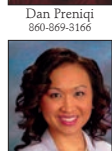
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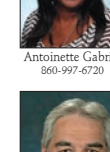
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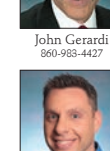
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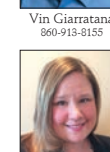
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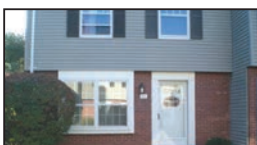
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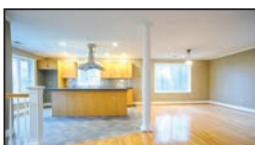
**Wethersfield**  
Well built 7 room Split Level! XL LR has hardwood, wood fireplace; Sun filled kitchen accesses deck. Family room. Freshly painted, updated electrical panel, newer thermo pane windows, 2 car garage.  
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Spacious 3BD Ranch w in-law apartment in fully finished lower level. Eat-in kitchen, hardwood floors throughout, fireplace living room. Sunroom overlooks yard & stone patio. 1-car attached garage.  
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**Rocky Hill**  
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**Rocky Hill**  
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**MaureenHorowitz.com** 860-205-9678



**Newington**  
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**Meriden**  
Spacious 4BR/2BA. Move right in to this home with a newer roof, siding, and windows! Recently converted to natural gas heat! Updated bath and newer full bath. Garage. Close to schools!  
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# Wethersfield LIFE

**January 2017**

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## QUOTE OF NOTE:

"We bring the pub to you."

- Stephen Miskell

See story page 6

## ON THE COVER

John MacDonald of the Wethersfield Academy for the Arts provided this image of his oil painting "Winter Stream" to wish a happy holiday season to all of our readers.

Courtesy photo

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# Music is in Matt DeChamplain's blood

**Jazz pianist is scheduled to perform at the Keeney Center on Jan. 15**

by **Mark Jahne**  
*Editor*

**M**att DeChamplain is all about jazz. The Wethersfield native and professional musician lives it each and every day.

He brings his talent to the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center at 4 p.m. Jan. 15 for an afternoon of jazz ranging from ragtime to the modern day. The pianist will be accompanied on some of the tunes by his wife Atla, a jazz vocalist.

DeChamplain, 31, teaches at the Hartt School of the University of Hartford. His concert is the opening show in the Wethersfield Historical Society's 24th season of the Keeney Cultural Series.

"I'm on the faculty [at Hartt]. This is my fourth year," he said. "I teach a jazz appreciation class."

Tickets for the concert are \$10 for historical society members and \$12 for others. His appearance is financially supported by the Robert Allan Keeney Memorial Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

During his academic career, DeChamplain split his days between Wethersfield High School and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, studying under Jimmy Greene and Dave Santoro. He graduated in 2003.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in musical performance from the Hartt School in 2007 and a master's degree from the University of Toledo later on.

DeChamplain met his future wife in 2001 at the academy of the arts. They married in 2009. She is

a jazz vocal instructor at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury.

He has performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz, Berks Jazz Festival, New York's JVC Jazz Festival, Berklee Jazz Festival, Kennedy Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center and renowned jazz clubs such as the Regatta Bar, Smalls and Yoshi's.

In 2008, he was selected for the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead Program, where he engaged in a two-week intensive composition and performance workshop under the instruction of jazz luminaries Dr. Billy Taylor, Nathan Davis and Curtis Fuller. That culminated in three performances filmed live from the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

That same year he was part of a group led by bassist Nat Reeves that toured New Ross, Ireland, the ancestral home of John F. Kennedy's family. DeChamplain later participated as a semifinalist in the Martial Solal Jazz Piano Competition in Paris, France.

As a sideman, he has appeared on guitarist Norman Johnson's album "Get It While You Can," violinist Jason Anick's album "Tipping Point," and recorded several songs with vocal legend Jon Hendricks for "Holiday Wishes II: River of Stars."

DeChamplain recorded a solo piano album titled "Stride-Bop" that sought to fuse the Harlem stride tradition with bebop and hardbop language. This past year, he and Atla released their first

collaboration entitled "Pause." That album features a guest appearance by Hendricks.

"I like to be very eclectic within the jazz area," DeChamplain said. "A lot of the repertoire I do is from the Great American Songbook."

He loves the fact that jazz is 100 years old and has so many different genres. He is particularly fond of the stride style, which dates from the 1920s, and swing music. He also plays bebop, hard bebop and cool jazz.

"My grandfather had a player piano," he recalled.

That instrument fascinated him as a child and helped create his passion for playing piano. But the effect was not immediate.

"I took my first piano lessons in second grade for two months and I quit," he said with a laugh.

His interest was rekindled by the time he started middle school and that's when he truly felt that his life's desire was to play the piano professionally.

Studying and later teaching at the arts academy was a huge benefit, a whole different level of learning and performance, as he described it. Live performances allow him to deal with improvisation and he greatly enjoys that.

DeChamplain performs in front of a live audience at least twice a week. Regular venues include Smokin' With Chris restaurant in Southington and Max Downtown.

"It can be an amazing experience," he said. "I just did a gig in New York at the Refinery Hotel," a popular jazz venue in Manhattan.

"I've done a lot of jazz festivals."

The January show will be his first time playing for the historical society under his own name. He was an accompanist for a show at the Keeney headlined by Dianne Mower a few years ago.

"I love to teach it, too. It's really important to pass it on," he said.

DeChamplain enjoys living in this area in large part because Hartford has a long history as a welcoming place for jazz music and musicians. Many of them, like Brad Mehldau, Jimmy Greene and the late Jackie McLean, enjoy national reputations.

"It's a special place," he said.

He learns from both teaching and playing. He has always been fascinated with the harmony and rhythms of jazz.

"It's kind of a language unto itself," he said. **WL**

For more information, or tickets, call 860-529-7656 or visit [wethersfieldhistory.org](http://wethersfieldhistory.org). The Keeney Cultural Center is located at 200 Main St. in Old Wethersfield.

**"I like to be very eclectic within the jazz area. A lot of the repertoire I do is from the Great American Songbook."**

**– Matt DeChamplain**

Courtesy photo

Wethersfield native Matt DeChamplain is a professional jazz pianist and adjunct professor at the Hartt School of the University of Hartford. He will perform in concert Jan. 15 at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center sponsored by the Wethersfield Historical Society.

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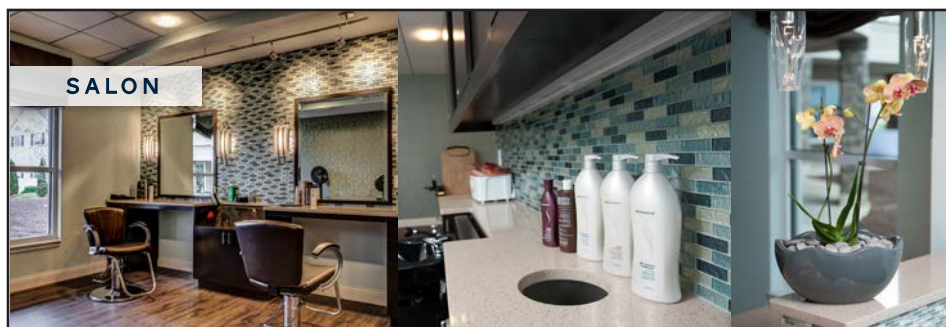
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Courtesy photos

**Kim Taute and Irish immigrant Stephen Miskell own and operate their Inflatable Pubs CT business.**

## Drop by for a pint – anywhere

**Inflatable Pubs CT brings a cozy Irish bar to your home**

**by Mark Jahne**  
*Editor*

Anyone who has visited Ireland knows that much of its social life revolves around the neighborhood pub. It is a place where people go for food, music, drink and socialization.

Now those who want to offer that experience to their family and friends can do so without traveling across the Atlantic Ocean. All one needs to do is call Inflatable Pubs CT.

The new business is run by Wethersfield residents Stephen Miskell and Kim Taute. Their Irish-themed pubs can be set up in the back yard or any other flat area and are available for weddings, graduations and parties of every kind.

"We bring the pub to you," Miskell said.

But it doesn't stop there. They also rent an array of party services including lawn games, chairs and tables, whiskey cask tables and a giant inflatable dartboard with Velcro-tipped darts. The whole idea, as Miskell sees it, is to share their love all things Irish with others.

He hails from Galway on the Emerald Isle's west coast. He came

to the United States in 2004 and founded a home remodeling service called Galway Tiling. The couple co-founded Inflatable Pubs CT earlier this year.

Taute is a lifelong resident who works as a human resources director for an area nonprofit organization. Her Irish roots trace back to her great-grandparents.

Miskell is a member of the board of directors of the Irish American Home Society in Glastonbury and is vice chairman of the Hartford Gaelic Athletic Association.

Their inflatables are styled after actual historic Irish pubs. They come in 40-person and 70-person sizes and are made from durable polyvinyl chloride tarpaulin plastic featuring an open floor plan.

The larger model is 33 feet by 17 feet wide. It comes with a bar and lighting. Rentals begin at \$450 and increase depending upon the size of the pub and the number of other party services. Package deals are available.

"My cousin has one in Galway in Ireland. I've been thinking about it for over a year," Miskell said.

"We're the only one in Connecticut right now."

The couple decided to open their business in September. They figured things would be slow at first, especially with the cold weather approaching. They were wrong.

"We've had bookings every weekend since," he said in late November.

"We were shocked to have any bookings," Taute said with a smile.

They already have one of their pubs reserved for a wedding on Memorial Day 2017. There are reservations for St. Patrick's Day as well. As Miskell sees it, he offers a lot more than mere protection from the sun or rain.

"People pay a lot of money for a big tent – and it's just a tent," he said. "We've got another big one coming."

"People love to have the custom banner," Taute added.

They hope to offer additional components to renters as their business grows. Two possibilities are live music and Irish step dancing. **WL**

For more information call 860-263-9660 or see [inflatablepubsct.com](http://inflatablepubsct.com).



Stephen Miskell's inflatable pubs can be easily erected in the backyard for any kind of party. This inflatable is a replica of a real pub in Galway, Ireland.

**"We bring  
the pub to you."**  
– Stephen Miskell



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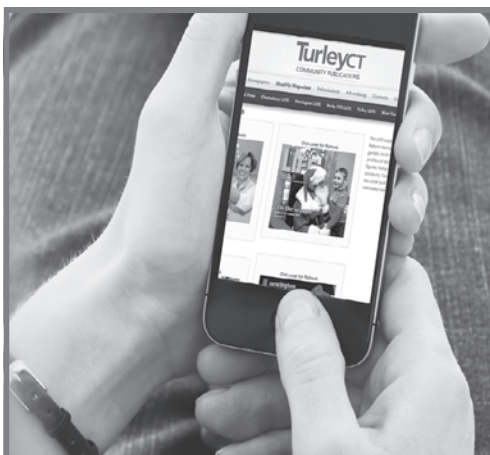
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# Making a stand

Local women travel to Native American reservation to oppose pipeline

by Allie Rivera  
Staff Writer

When some people see what they consider injustice, they write a letter, call a member of Congress or post on social media. When Debra Cohen and Diane Hasz see it, they spring into action.

After learning about the events happening at the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota,

the two friends loaded up Hasz's 2016 Subaru and drove there.

"We wanted to help in whatever way we can, but mostly we wanted simply to bear witness," Cohen said.

The controversy at the Native American reservation was just starting to gain wider attention when the two took their journey in mid-November.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe began holding demonstrations against the installation of the Dakota Access pipeline, a \$3.7 billion project that involves a 30-inch diameter and 1,172-mile long pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois carrying roughly 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

The project has been opposed by the Standing Rock tribe, with support from other Native

The camp at Standing Rock became the temporary home for thousands of people demonstrating against the Dakota Access pipeline.

Photos provided by Debra Cohen



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Americans across the country, as they say it both threatens sacred native lands and has the potential to contaminate the community's water supply from the Missouri River.

"They've so often been called protestors, but they're not. They're water protectors," Cohen, a Wethersfield resident, said. "There is a pipeline directly threatening ancestral and treaty land. It will be directly under the Missouri River and we know what happens when pipelines burst.

"They are out there trying to protect the environment because we are all downstream from something," she added.

For months, demonstrators set up a camp at Standing Rock. In response, the Morton County sheriff's office as well as Cass County law enforcement began forming a highly militarized police force.

By early November, confrontations between the two groups had grown violent with police allegedly using water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas, among other tactics, on the unarmed demonstrators.

"They're flying planes overhead all night long to keep people awake," Cohen said. "They're doing everything they can to disrupt this."

Cohen and Hasz, a resident of Cromwell, did not see any of the violence first hand. Instead, they visited the nearby reservation, where thousands of people had set up camp to contribute to the cause.

Before leaving on their three-day drive to North Dakota the two friends, who had never traveled together before, began collecting donations to give to the demonstrators at the camp.

"People also donated money and so we purchased a lot of things for the trip, too," Hasz said.

Her Subaru, affectionately named Carmen, was loaded with shovels, tarps, latex-free gloves, feminine hygiene products, sleeping bags, non-perishable food and 100 pounds of rice.

They spent most of the five days in North Dakota at the reservation camp, but Cohen and Hasz slept at a nearby hotel for the duration of their stay.

"We knew that, while an inter-



**Diane Hasz, left, of Cromwell and Debra Cohen, right, of Wethersfield, loaded Hasz's 2016 Subaru with supplies and drove to the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota in mid-November. They wanted to help those opposing an oil pipeline through Native American land.**

esting option, staying at the camp was unrealistic for us," Hasz said.

"We also realized that if we stayed at the hotel, we could offer showers and a warm place to rest for those at the camp," Cohen added. "It turned out that providing showers was our biggest donation. In five

days, we provided 18 showers."

When at the camp, both women said that the general feeling was one of purpose. Every person there had come for the same reason and many were prepared to stay for as long as necessary.

"It was solemn and purposeful,"

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While driving to the camp, friends Debra Cohen and Diane Hasz passed a sign signifying the start of the Standing Rock Reservation's tribal lands.

Hasz said. "They were really hunkering down and preparing for winter."

They also spoke about the idea of spirit guiding them and others throughout their time there.

"I can't tell you how many people I spoke to who spoke about spirit – spirit taking them there, spirit guiding them," Cohen said. "People from all religious paths were finding

this common path of spirit."

There was no cellular service, so communication was minimal. They had planned before leaving Connecticut the specific ways in which they hoped to help in the camp, such as in the kitchen, but they found that once there those plans were superfluous.

"There's this wonderful thing of just letting go of control," Cohen said. "Our planning meant nothing. Our timing meant nothing."

Despite this, the two women said that they never felt aimless or that their efforts couldn't be utilized.

"It seemed that, truly, we constantly found ourselves in the right place at the right time to fill a need or make a connection," Cohen said. "It's that sort of thing that makes me believe spirit is there in some sort of way, whatever you believe."

Cohen and Hasz stressed that they were only a small part of a much larger effort. They recognized that they were coming onto someone else's land and into someone else's fight, so they wanted to remain as sensitive as possible.

"Our role is not to arrive and take charge and save the day for the native people out there," Cohen said. "Our role is to be an ally."

"You have to realize where you are," Hasz added. "There are cultural considerations that we don't normally think about."

After returning to Connecticut, they started brainstorming ways to get more supplies out to the people at Standing Rock. While they don't believe they can be helpful during the cold winter months, they want to continue to support the efforts of the demonstrators.

In early December, major changes at Standing Rock occurred. On Dec. 3, roughly 2,000 U.S. military veterans began arriving at the camp as part of the Veterans Stand for Standing Rock group to support and relieve regular demonstrators.

The following day, Dec. 4, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied an easement for the pipeline to cross through the reservation, effectively stopping the project.

Cohen went back to the reservation in mid-December. **WL**

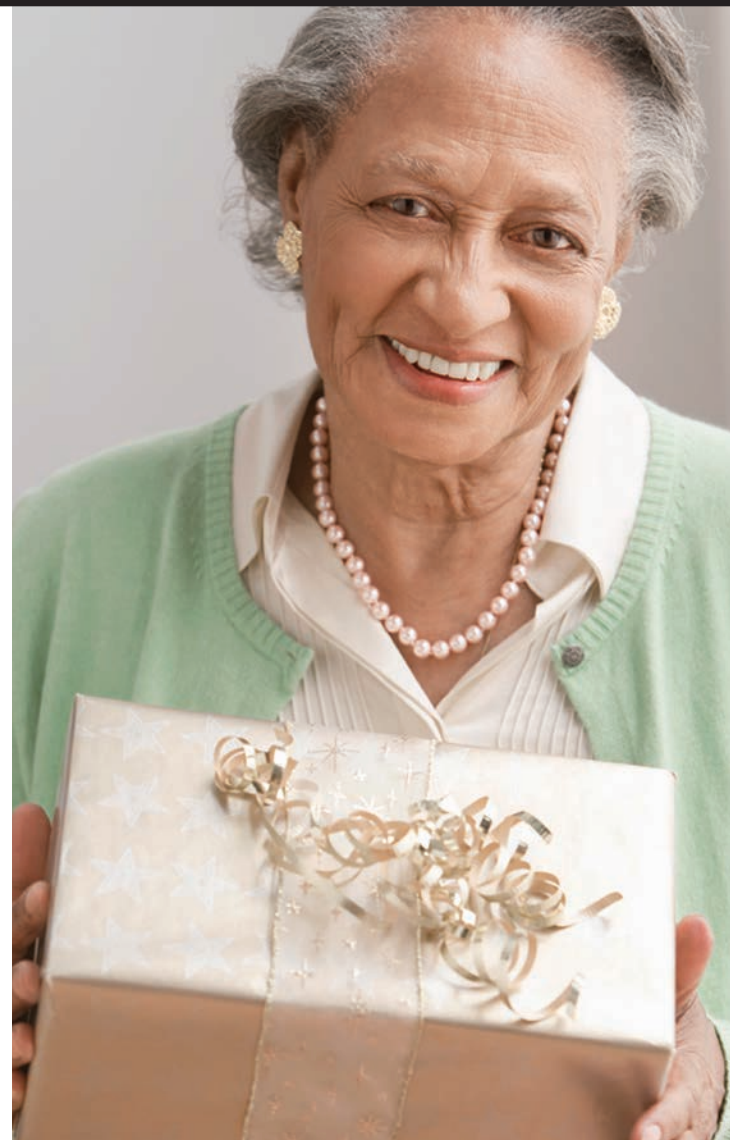
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# Sharing its bounty

Richard M. Keane Foundation donates \$19,000 to food bank

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

Judy Keane has always believed that she would rather have charitable dollars actively working in the community than sitting in the bank. That's why the Richard M. Keane Foundation, of which she is president, started sharing some of its funds with other nonprofits in town a year ago.

The latest outreach was a check for \$19,000 presented to the town Social and Youth Services Department to support the town's food bank for residents who struggle to put meals on the table each day. The money came from the foundation's annual Cove Side Carnival, held in October.

"Last year, we made a donation to the food bank as well with a portion of the proceeds from the carnival," Keane said.

This year, carnival Chairman Mark Trahan urged her to donate all of the net proceeds to the cause. So that's what they did.

"It was such a great weekend. We had no rain, no snow. This is the first year we had three really good days," Keane said. "This year was our best ever."

The carnival, now in its eighth year, has historically been plagued by bad weather. It finally caught a break in 2016. She gives credit not only to Mother Nature but to WFSB-TV personality Scot Haney, who actively promoted the event.

"He's a super, super help to us, a

**"Kids and seniors don't always get good nutrition."**

– Judy Keane



The Richard M. Keane Foundation donated \$19,000 to support the town's food bank. This money came from the foundation's annual Cove Side Carnival.

Courtesy photo

wonderful person," she said. "Many nonprofits in Greater Hartford owe their success to him."

Town social and youth services seemed like a natural place to donate this money. In addition to

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operating the food bank, the department also provides clothing, toys for children at Christmas, and school supplies each fall, all for residents in need.

Keane said the money will help fill the food bank shelves at times of year, especially summer, when donations drop off and the shelves have a limited supply. It will also allow town officials to revise their storage system and shelving, and perhaps add some refrigeration to allow fresh produce to be stored and distributed.

Keane said her organization also received a discount card from P.C. Richard & Son that was given to the town to allow it to buy a refrigerator for the food bank. The Keane

Foundation already participates in a weekend backpack program and summer food program for children in need in town.

"Kids and seniors don't always get good nutrition," Keane said.

She is grateful that town staff Kathleen Bagley, Erica Teixeira and Christine Taylor spent the entire weekend at the Cove Side Carnival helping out, accepting donations and signing up people who qualify for the food bank or other town programs.

Bagley, director of youth and social services, said she is thrilled with the assistance her department has received from the foundation.

"It's outstanding to have that kind of generosity. They've helped us

in the past. They're commitment to us has just been great. It's been a really great partnership," she said.

The newfound money for the food bank will come in handy, though she has yet to decide exactly how it will be spent.

"There are so many possibilities ... we're exploring those right now," Bagley said.

Meanwhile, the Keane Foundation is busy working on its annual Christmas luminaries fundraiser. People all across town buy small white bags to line the front of their property and place candles inside them to provide a flickering holiday tribute.

As in the past, the luminary kits

are on sale at Wethersfield Travel, 219 Main St. Each bag/candle combination costs \$1.50 and advance calls are requested for larger orders. The candles are designed to burn for as long as 14 hours.

A tradition started 41 years ago by Martha and Stephen Kirsche, the money raised now from luminaries sales goes to the foundation. Not only do most streets in town participate, but other towns are getting into the spirit as well.

Keane used it as an example of how people have come forward over the years to assist her organization.

"People have come forward with fundraisers that we're still doing years later," she said. **WL**



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# A charitable start

Children raise money for Connecticut Children's Medical Center

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

**J**ames and Jenna Laufer are elementary school students. But despite their age, they are already doing big things.

The children of Danny and Jill (Gelfenbien) Laufer of Wethersfield wanted to do something for one of their mother's students who was ill. So they settled on a one-day lemonade stand and the project just took off.

"We have been having a lemonade stand in honor of one of my students who is fighting leukemia. All of the money we have raised has gone to CCMC (Connecticut Children's Medical Center)," Laufer said.

She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where she played inter-collegiate soccer and also won an NCAA championship as a member of the women's basketball team in 1994-95. Her husband works for the Travelers.

"I started teaching at Kingswood Oxford right away" after graduating from UConn, she said, then moved to Chicago to attend graduate school at Loyola University. She coached soccer while there and met her husband, who grew up in New York City, during her time in Chicago.

The couple married and moved south when he secured a job coaching



James and Jenna Laufer show off the CCMC medallions they earned for their charitable work.

Courtesy photos



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Jill and Danny Laufer are teaching their children about charity and giving at an early age. James, 7, and Jenna, 9, operate an annual lemonade stand to raise money for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

When they first started the lemonade stand, the proceeds were used to purchase gifts for CCMC patients. Jill Laufer holds James, and Jenna is with Morgan Bjarno, far right, a student of Laufer, whom the children wanted to help when she was sick. The CCMC employee in the center was not identified.

**"We did it again in 2015 and 2016 and it got much, much bigger. We now have a page on the CCMC website."**

**- Jill Laufer**

track and field at the University of Virginia. She found a position teaching high school math. Their next stop was back here, in the town where she grew up.

"I've been teaching at Glastonbury High School since 2008," Laufer said.

Five years ago, Jenna told her parents that she wanted to start a lemonade stand. She was only 4 years old at the time. She's 9 now and James is 7.

"We set up on the corner and neighbors just

came along," Laufer said.

They made something like \$40. The hospital suggested they use the money to buy gift items for sick children at CCMC so they went shopping at Target.

They did another lemonade stand three years



later in August 2014, this time in honor of Laufer's student, Morgan Bjarno. The teenage girl was a GHS student at the time.

This time they promoted the event through social media and many more people attended. A total of \$840 was raised.

"It was just a ton of fun, the most beautiful thing," Laufer said.

With Morgan's help, they went shopping again and bought toys and other fun items that young

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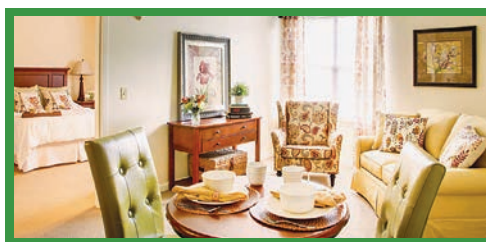
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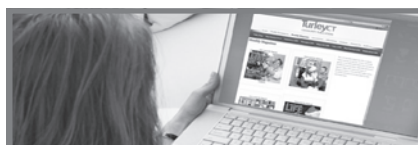
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and teenage patients at the hospital would like. That was the end of their special trips to Target.

"We did it again in 2015 and 2016 and it got much, much bigger. We now have a page on the CCMC website," Laufer said. "At this point, we've raised almost \$7,200 total" from a one-day-a-year event.

The money they raise now goes toward clinical trials for cancer and blood diseases. Friends, family and neighborhood children have all flocked to this event the past two years. Some bring along baked goods to sell.

"You've got all these kids on our lawn ... they look forward to it," Laufer said. "The whole idea of the community coming together for this is such a heart-warming thing. I'm moved by the generosity of so many people."

She is delighted to see her own children gain satisfaction from helping other, less fortunate children. Jenna talked about the joy she gets from giving.

"I saw people raising money for things," she said.



The whole neighborhood comes over to support the effort.

That seemed like a good idea to her. So she asked if she could do the same and her parents said yes. She remembers making a cardboard sign to announce the event.

"The first year, my mom took a video," Jenna said. "The first time we had Goldfish [crackers]

and lemonade."

"I like giving the money," James said. "I want to do it twice a year."

He enjoys having a big summer party on the lawn and starts asking his parents months ahead of time how soon they will be holding their annual lemonade event.

Laufer believes it is important for her children to practice empathy and understand how people like Morgan feel when they are battling a disease. She hopes that charitable giving becomes a permanent part of their lives.

Eileen Bjarno, Morgan's mother, is grateful for the financial and emotional support.

"I think it's great. The kids met Morgan over the summer when Jill was tutoring Morgan here," she said.

That was three years ago. Her daughter is now 19 and a student at Providence College.

"We went the day of the lemonade stand the last two years. What a great little neighborhood," Bjarno said.

She grew up no more than a mile away on Maple Street and gave Laufer credit for being much more than a tutor. As much as the little children gained from helping others, Bjarno said Morgan benefited as well.

"She gained from that side of people, especially young kids, trying to help," she said. **WL**

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The Wethersfield All Stars are Jessica Foberg, Cristina Ayala, Zane Tatro, Dan Moitoza, Kevin Ajohdi, Stephen LaCava, Jamie Daly, Nick DiSanzo, Justin Riker, Alison Marino, Bob Chellstorp and Dan Gornicz.



## Special Olympians perform at holiday classic

**T**he Wethersfield Special Olympics delegation had several athletes training in both unified basketball and traditional bowling since September. The local program sent four teams to the Unified Sports Holiday Classic Nov. 19-20 in New Haven.

Two masters' teams competed at Quinnipiac

University while one junior team and one senior team competed at Cheshire Academy. The unified basketball teams took home three gold and one silver medal. The bowling team took home one gold medal, one silver medal, two bronze medals and three fourth place ribbons.

Athletes and their unified peer partners worked to develop their team under the direction

of basketball coaches Richard Scoppetto, Nikki Mordasiewicz and Dan Moitoza and bowling coaches Chrissy Nemicas and Demi Arroyo.

These athletes attend Wethersfield High School, Silas Deane Middle School, Hanmer School, Emerson-Williams School and the Wethersfield Transition Academy. **WL**



The Wethersfield Hawks are, back, Danny Bighinatti, David Dale and Brian Kallajian; front, Emily Kallajian, Marc LaPuma, Patrick Martin, Jake Montross and Oscar Velasco.



The Wethersfield Eagles are, back, Daniel Jimenez, Sean Marren and Nick Morrison; front, Billy Pilkington, Dominic Sansabrino, Danny Santiago-Rodriguez and David Velasco.



The Wethersfield Warriors are, from left, Kevin Ajohdi, Vinny Apanovitch, Casey Casasanta, Bob Chellstorp, Nikki Mordasiewicz, Nick DiSanzo, Joey Grodovich, Joyce Grodovich and Zachary Zapatka.

## EDUCATION

# LIFE

*in the classroom*

## Putting some 'wow' into the day at Silas Deane Middle School

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

**T**he day before a school break historically tends to be one of less than usual achievement. Students are more focused on the upcoming time off than on their studies.

When she became principal of Silas Deane Middle School this past year, Susan Czaplá decided to change that. So, with the support of her faculty and staff, she instituted "Wow Day."

She didn't come up with the idea herself. It's a concept that is being used elsewhere across the country not only in schools, but in corporate business and other settings. Different and fun ways are offered to perk up the usual daily activities and provide a "wow" factor for the participants.

"We want to create a scenario where people walk away saying wow," Czaplá said. "This year we're doing problem solving."

Her plan is to reengage stu-



Madelyn Day and Hadden Gaunt do their best to carefully maneuver the pen.

Photos by Mark Jahne

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## EDUCATION



Teacher Conor Stanley explains the problem-solving challenge facing a combined grades 7-8 health class.



Teamwork is the name of the game for, from left, Arianna Nieves, Nadia Baroni, Kate Fote, Giancarlo Santapaola and Sean Meyer.

dents prior to their time off so that they leave school that day feeling upbeat and positive and return from their break energized about learning.

“The whole premise behind Wow is uplifting people,” she said. “We’re getting ready to do a Wow presentation for the Board of Education so

they understand what we do.”

Czapla said SDMS teachers quickly bought into the idea because it grants them wide latitude in com-

ing up with their own ideas for activities that combine fun and learning. Even some parents have become involved.

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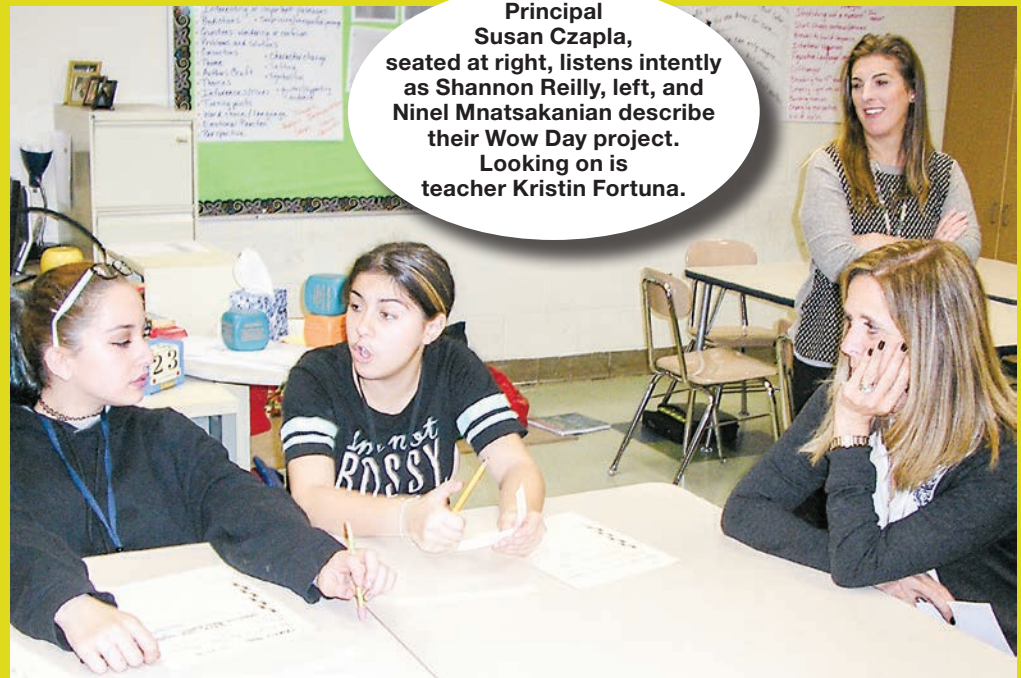


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## EDUCATION



Caroline Provost and Ethan Malloy explain their metrics exercise to Principal Susan Czapla.



Principal Susan Czapla, seated at right, listens intently as Shannon Reilly, left, and Ninel Mnatsakanian describe their Wow Day project. Looking on is teacher Kristin Fortuna.

Those activities may be enjoyable but they all incorporate a healthy dose of education. They are designed to help meet the school's three goals of academic excellence, public service and civic engagement.

The theme for the first day of classes in September was the Olympics. When they break for the winter holidays, Wow Day will have a team-building theme. There are a total of four Wow Days offered during the academic year.

Students in an eighth-grade Family Consumer Science classroom were tasked with drawing something using a black marking pen. That may sound easy, but the challenge was in the fact that the pen was tied to the center of a web of ribbons.

Once the cap was off they could no longer touch the pen. So they had

to work as a team to maneuver the strings to make pen contact paper and then try to draw the assigned diagram. It wasn't easy.

Another activity revolved around following clues to solve a puzzle related to a home kitchen. Small prizes were awarded to the winners.

Students in the cafeteria were busy collecting puzzle pieces as part of a music exercise. They had to connect enough of the pieces to figure out a saying, then find and connect more pieces to figure out a song.

A language arts class was trying to solve the problem of who stole the jewels on the Titanic. This fit into the curriculum unit of historical fiction.

Social studies students were working to solve a murder mystery.

A world language class was learning all about Mexican holiday decorations and creating some of their own.

Science classes were tackling the engineering challenge of constructing a "puffmobile" and seeing how far they could propel it with one strong breath.

The hallways were full of students improving their math skills in the Mini Metric Olympics. Plastic plates were used for the discus throw, straws for the javelin toss, and everything they did had to be measured and quantified.

Another math class had to figure out how to incorporate four 9s into an equation that would come out to equal 100.

"We always want to tie it into future learning and past learning,"

Czapla said.

Additional goals are building motivation and finding value in one's peers. All of that comes from brain-based research, she added. Assistant Principal Cynthia Fries is also excited about Wow Day.

"You want to energize the brain and make it exciting," Fries said. "The kids are so enthusiastic about it, the teachers are so on board with it," she said.

Teachers honor each other's efforts with what are called Apple Appreciation Awards.

"We model it to the teachers and the teachers model it to the students. Cindy and I try to do our staff meetings with the same Wow premise," Czapla said.

"The collaboration has just skyrocketed," Fries added. **WL**

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Business owners, town officials, chamber of commerce representatives and the general contractor use gold-colored shovels to break ground for the new Beaver Brook Animal Hospital. It will be constructed on the Silas Deane Highway, just north of the Church Street intersection.

Photos by Mark Jahne

## Calling all dogs and cats

Beaver Brook Animal Hospital breaks ground for new facility

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

Visibility is an important factor in business. So is an up-to-date facility. Those are

the two primary reasons why Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is constructing a new facility on the Silas Deane Highway just north of its intersection with Church Street.

It won't be that much larger than the current veterinary operation on Beaver Road but it will be a great deal more visible. Medical directors Dr. Howard Asher and Dr. Monica Dijanic are excited about the move.

They have been in business for five years on Beaver Road in what was once a separately owned and operated veterinary clinic. But they still meet people who tell them they had no idea an animal hospital was located on that street.

"Location, location, location," Asher said, when asked for the leading benefit the new facility will provide.

"That's been our biggest problem," Dijanic added.

The new structure will also meet the fear-free veterinary guidelines and be much more efficient than their current

building. It will employ green building technologies including energy-efficient construction and operation.

The staff has already been trained and certified in ways to adapt their methods to make pets more comfortable when visiting the veterinarian and decrease the level of fear, anxiety and stress. Components include minimal restraint, pre-visit medication and relaxation pills.



Dr. Howard Asher and Dr. Monica Dijanic are the owners and medical directors at Beaver Brook Animal Hospital.

"We use a lot of high value treats to distract them," Asher said.

"It is a new initiative in the veterinary field," Dijanic said. "We only do dogs and cats right now."

They hope to expand their client base to treat more exotic kinds of pets. Beaver Brook already offers laser therapy and acupuncture and its new home will allow the vets to add rehabilitation and chiropractic services.

The building will be 6,200 square feet with two floors. Among the new features are cat condos and an outside play area for boarding dogs. There will be no shortage of updated technology.

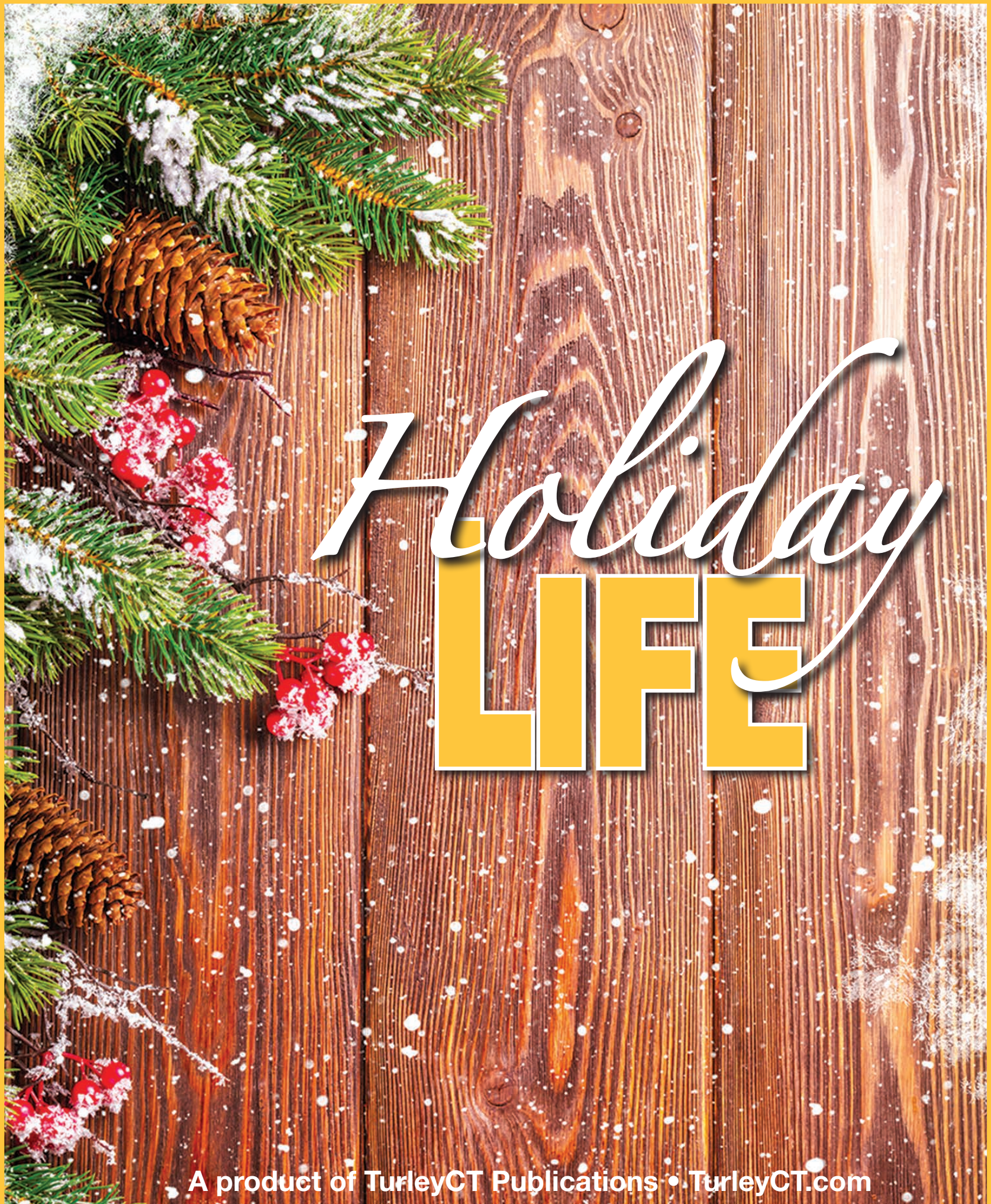
"We're going to have more exam rooms and a dental suite," Dijanic said. "We just upgraded to digital radiology."

There will also be a "comfort room" for various procedures.

Both veterinarians are hopeful that this move will enable them to expand what they already called a good-sized and loyal client base. They hope to move the entire operation into the new building by next March.

The general contractor on the project is Percon, Inc. **WL**

Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is currently located at 60 Beaver Road. Call 860-757-3346 or visit beaverbrookah.com.



# Dreaming Of A GREEN Christmas

Tips to make  
your holiday more  
environmentally friendly

by Lynn Woike  
*LIFE Staff*

**G**reen candles, green wreaths and green table runners don't necessarily add up to a green Christmas. The season tends to result in more garbage and more energy consumption, but with a bit of effort and planning, the environmental impact of the holiday season can be reduced.

"I like the idea of buying a real Christmas tree versus a fake one," said Margery Winters, assistant director at the Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, adding, "It smells better and it's more in keeping with the season."

Christy Page, assistant park naturalist at Westmoor Park in West Hartford also advocates

for live trees, saying, "They are a renewable resource, and the Christmas tree farms provide bird and animal habitats throughout the years as the trees grow to useable size."

LED lights are more energy efficient, which is more eco-friendly, Winters said.

She also suggested pruning other evergreens, including holly and ivy, to bring inside and use as decorations during the Christmas season.

To prevent any bugs from coming in with pine cones, she suggested putting them in a 150-degree oven for 30-60 minutes.

"Keep it simple," Winters said.

"Use less plastic and more



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## Holiday LIFE

natural materials.”

When the dropping needles signal it's time to take down the tree, Winters said she likes to dismantle the tree with pruning shears and use the branches as mulch in her garden to keep the ground cold and the perennials from popping up prematurely if the temperature rises.

Every year, Kasha Breau, the lead teacher naturalist at Connecticut Audubon Society,

**“There’s something special about giving your time.”**

**– John Calandrelli**

Center at Glastonbury, puts her Christmas tree up outside instead of inside.

She decorates a small evergreen tied to a post with cold-weather ornaments for the birds, such as bagel slices covered with peanut butter and dipped in birdseed, and kabob-like decorations using fresh cranberries, pieces of apple, grapes and orange slices.

“You can use the green floral wire” to hold the food, forming a loop at the bottom so it does not fall off, and hanging it on a branch. When the fruit has been eaten, you can remove

the wire, wipe it off, put on more food and rehang it, making your tree different every time. Slices of apple and oranges can also be hung with string or wire.

“It makes your tree a really friendly place,” she said.

It doesn't have to be an evergreen tree, Breau said, noting that bird-friendly ornaments can be hung from any tree, and lights can also be added.

“That way there's no mess of a tree in the house, no needles falling off. ... It's something a little bit different,” she said.

“Instead of giving a lot of ‘stuff’ at Christmas,” Peter McKnight, a member of the Connecticut Sierra Club who works in West Hartford, suggests “giving a donation to an eco-friendly organization or to a group you know the recipient supports.”

Page echoed that suggestion.

“Donate to something good on behalf of someone – there are a lot of organizations that have ways to ‘gift’ someone by donating in their name. Find an organization that fits the passions of the person you are trying



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## Holiday LIFE

to buy for, and use the amount you would have spent on a physical gift to donate in their name instead," she said.

If it seems an envelope is not enough to open, McKnight advocated for adding "something small, useful and consumable that won't end up in a landfill," such as soap made at a local farm or a mini loaf of bread.

John Calandrelli, Connecticut Sierra Club's local program manager, avoids Black Friday "at all costs," calling it the most important step to having a greener Christmas.

Rather, he said, "Give of yourself" to family and friends. "There's something special about giving your time: you don't know how much of it you have and once it's gone, you can't get it back.

"Promise them one back rub or take them to ride a horse or take them

ice skating. Your time and caring are more important than anything you can give them. If they like to open something on the holiday, you can wrap your giving in a box or envelope. Your gift will keep giving after the holiday craziness is long gone."

Page likes giving "adventures instead of gifts," such as certificates

for a shared experience such as camping, hiking, canoeing, or even going to see a movie together.

Cheri Collins, coordinator at the Wethersfield Nature Center, said, "One thing that people have been doing in recent years, that I like and have done as well, is instead of using paper, to buy some really nice fabric

to wrap gifts in."

The fabric can be reused to wrap future gifts, or, if a dish towel or scarf were chosen, they can become usable gifts as well.

"I like to hand make gifts for people," she said.

In addition to handmade and home-baked items, she likes to give herbs and other plants to friends.

For Doug Jackson, a park naturalist at Westmoor Park, a green Christmas is a part of green living. However you define it, 'green' is a more simple lifestyle that reduces "the amount of things we consume," he said.

"If you have been in the habit of making extensive light displays during the holiday season, then scale it down in size. ... For family travel plans, be intentional about how much driving you do during the holidays. ... Make your home as energy efficient as possible, in as many areas as possible: heating, lighting, etc.," Jackson said.

That way, eco-friendly efforts will extend into the new year. **WL**



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# Holiday FAVORITES

## From our... recipe files ...to yours

Our favorite recipes for the holidays or other days

The holidays are a time of giving, and of creating special meals for family and friends. With that in mind, staff members at TurleyCT Community Publications are sharing some of our very favorite recipes, delicious at the holidays or any time of the year.

### Italian Anise Cookies

#### Ingredients:

3/4 cup sugar  
1 stick butter  
2 large eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
1 teaspoon anise extract  
2 3/4 cup all-purpose flour  
2 1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon fine salt

#### Directions:

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Coat baking sheets with non-stick spray.

Beat first five ingredients on low speed. Beat in the next three ingredients until blended. Drop rounded teaspoons of dough onto the cookie sheets about 2" apart. Bake 10 to 12 minutes until golden on bottom. Cool on a wire rack. Dip tops in glaze (below).

**Glaze:** Combine one cup confectioner's sugar, 4 to 5 tsp. milk and a tsp. of anise extract. After glazing, top with a sprinkle or colored sugar of your choice.

Patty Ewert, one of our account executives, shared this recipe for easy Italian anise cookies. She said they're great for the holidays.

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## Holiday LIFE

### Bermuda Christmas Cassava Pie

#### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds (about 4 1/2 cups) harina de manioc  
(cassava meal, available at Hispanic markets and some specialty food shops)
- 8 cups milk
- 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
- 2 pounds chicken breasts, halved
- 1 1/2 pounds chicken thighs and drumsticks
- 3 pounds boneless beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 8 large eggs
- 1 1/4 teaspoons freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups firmly packed light brown sugar

#### Directions:

In a large bowl, combine harina de manioc and milk, stir until well combined. Cover and let stand 3 hours or overnight.  
In a heavy 4-quart saucepan, bring 2 cups of water to boil with the thyme. Add chicken, cover and simmer 30 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken to a bowl and reserve the broth. Skin and bone the chicken and cut it into 1-inch pieces. Bring reserved broth to a boil, add beef and cook, covered, over medium-high for 5 minutes or until it just begins to boil. Transfer beef with the slotted spoon. Pour broth into a heatproof bowl, skim fat from surface and reserve. To the beef, add the chicken, pepper and a teaspoon of salt, tossing until combined. Add the melted butter to the harina de manioc mixture, using your hands to blend until the butter is completely incorporated. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, the remaining 1 1/2 teaspoon salt, nutmeg, vanilla and brown sugar until smooth. Gradually add it to



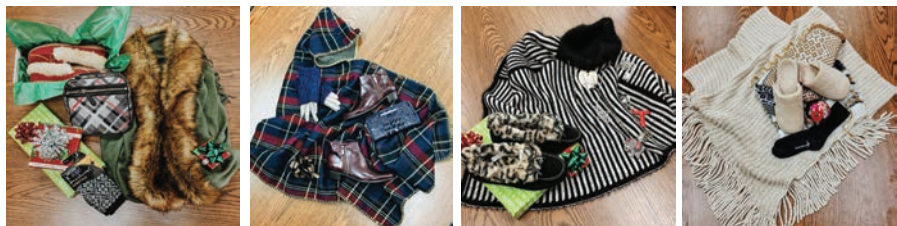
This amazing meat pie recipe comes from Lynn Woike, editor of West Hartford LIFE and Valley LIFE.

*"Because the co-worker with whom my sister shared a cab in 1978 panicked when he realized he'd forgot the cassava meal back at the hotel, our little German-Italian family will eat Bermuda Pie again this Christmas. A foodie, my sister followed him into a little market the cabbie detoured to on the way to the airport and bought the magic ingredient to a dish she'd never heard of. My ex-mother-in-law, a native of Bermuda, shared her recipe and my sister has been making her own version of it ever since."*

the harina de manioc mixture, stirring with a wooden spoon until well combined.

Pour half the batter into a well-buttered 5-quart baking pan that is 14 1/2 inches by 10 inches by 2 1/4 inches and spread evenly. Spoon the meat mixture over the batter, lightly pressing it into the batter. Spoon about 1/2 cup of the reserved broth over the mixture, or enough to moisten the meat well, then spread the remaining batter over the meat, leaving a 2-inch wide opening in the center of the pie. Brush the top with some of the reserved broth and place the pie on a baking sheet in the middle of a 350-degree oven for 90 minutes to 2 hours (or more), while basting the top every 20-30 minutes. The pie is done when the top is a deep gold and a tester comes out moist but not sticky. If the edges of the pie become very dark, cover them loosely with foil. Let the pie cool 20 minutes before serving. Serves 12-14.

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## Holiday LIFE

Here's another meat pie recipe, this one from Mark Jahne, editor of Newington LIFE, Rocky Hill LIFE, Cromwell LIFE and Wethersfield LIFE.

*My mother (Theresa) likes to cook this traditional French-Canadian holiday meal for Christmas and New Year's Day. Tourtiere – also called meat pie or pork pie – is classic winter comfort food. The following is a recipe for two pies.*

### Tourtiere

#### Ingredients:

2 pounds ground pork  
2 medium onions, chopped and mashed  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 teaspoon allspice  
Double crusts for two 9-inch pies

Place all ingredients in a large pot and add enough water to cover about three-quarters of the ingredients. Simmer, stirring frequently, for about 30 minutes. Adjust seasonings to taste. Divide the mixture between two pastry-lined 9-inch pie plates. Cover the top with pastry crust and make slits in the top crust to allow steam to escape. Bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375 and bake another 20 minutes, or until the pies are golden brown. Makes 8 to 12 servings.

### Chocolate Truffles

#### Ingredients:

1/2 pound bittersweet chocolate  
1/2 pound semisweet chocolate  
1 cup heavy cream  
2 tablespoons orange-flavored liqueur (optional)  
1 tablespoon prepared coffee  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Confectioners' sugar  
Cocoa powder

#### Directions:

Chop the chocolate finely with a sharp knife. Place in a heat-proof mixing bowl.

Heat the cream in a small saucepan until it just boils. Turn off the heat and allow the cream to sit for 20 seconds. Pour the cream through a fine-meshed sieve into the bowl with the chocolate. With a wire whisk, slowly stir the cream and chocolates together until the chocolate is completely melted. Whisk in the orange flavored liqueur, if using it, and the coffee and vanilla. Set aside at room temperature for one hour.

With 2 teaspoons, spoon round balls of the chocolate mixture onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Roll each ball of chocolate in your hands to roughly make it round. Roll in confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder or both.

These will keep refrigerated for weeks, but serve them at room temperature.

This recipe, involving chocolate and sinfully good, comes from Alicia B. Smith, our associate editor.

*"Growing up my family had several holiday traditions – cutting our own tree, our cardinal bird, midnight mass – but none of them related to food. When I got married, I was determined to carry on some of the traditions I had enjoyed while also incorporating those from my husband's family. That's why we have an enormous tree stuffed into our living room and I make bacon wrapped scallops to enjoy while we decorate said tree. One year I decided that we needed chocolate, because why not? This recipe was from an episode I saw on the Food Network and thought it would be the perfect thing. They are messy to make, but delicious to eat!"*

*When we decorate the tree we feast on the scallops and the truffles and my husband serves as bartender whipping up a mean Manhattan, or for an interesting flavor treat maybe a Hooker Chocolate Truffle from the Hooker Brewing Company, based in Bloomfield.*



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# Holiday LIFE



## Mara Dresner's Baked Ziti

Prep Time: 5 minutes  
Bake Time: 60 minutes  
Serves: 8

### Ingredients:

1 26-ounce jar pasta sauce  
1 1/2 cups water  
15 ounce container ricotta (part skim is fine)  
1/4 cup grated parmesan (fresh is best)  
2 cups shredded mozzarella  
8 ounces uncooked ziti  
Frozen vegetables, optional  
(a couple handfuls; I use broccoli florets)

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.  
Combine sauce and water.  
Stir in ricotta, parmesan and 1 cup mozzarella.  
Add in uncooked ziti and vegetables, if using.  
Spoon ziti mixture into 13" x 9" baking dish.  
Cover with foil and bake 55 minutes.  
Remove foil and sprinkle with remaining mozzarella.  
Bake uncovered for 5 minutes.

This recipe from staff writer Mara Dresner is a delicious – and vegetarian – version of an Italian favorite. “Everyone loves this vegetarian recipe and it’s a breeze to make. You can prepare it the day before, and it’s easy to transport and very forgiving. Plus, you can easily “make it your own” and add a few healthy hacks. I’m not sure where I first found it, but I’ve noted some of my tips. If you do make ahead, save a little cheese (or bring more) to sprinkle on top when you reheat. Leftovers will do well in the fridge or freezer.”



## Brandy (or rum) Balls

### Ingredients:

1 box crushed vanilla wafers  
(Nilla brand is best)  
1 cup sifted confectioner’s sugar  
2 tablespoons cocoa powder  
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts  
(optional)  
1/4 cup brandy or rum  
1/4 cup light corn syrup

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients. Add a little water – about 1 1/2 tablespoons – and form 3/4-inch balls. Roll in colored sugar and store in a tightly covered container.

The above is from the family recipe box of Glastonbury LIFE editor Nancy Thompson. “Many came from people I haven’t seen in years, but I think of them whenever I recreate their beloved recipes. Like Alicia’s truffles, this is pretty messy to make, but oh, so good.”



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# The dancing queen

Mary Ellen Reilly celebrates Dance 10 anniversary

by Mara Dresner  
Staff Writer

**W**hen Mary-Ellen Reilly was a tot growing up in Wethersfield, her grandmother wanted her to come out of her shell.

"When I was 3, my grandmother signed me up for dance because I was shy and I stuttered. It became my safest place. I wasn't shy at dance. I just loved it," Reilly said.

She started with tap and soon expanded into a variety of other styles, as well as gymnastics.

"I grew up with dancing with Alyce Carella," she said.

Carella ran a dance studio in the Elmwood section of West Hartford. By the time she was 13, Reilly was already an assistant teacher, as well as taking classes.

"Alyce gave me a lot of opportunities. I did promotional work for Coca Cola, for an indoor soccer team. I had to choose between a professional dance career and teaching, and teaching won out, not that I couldn't have made it [as a professional dancer], but I didn't want to take that route," she said.

"Teaching was more rewarding to me. I really enjoyed it. I loved kids."

Reilly, a graduate of Wethersfield High School, also taught for a number of other studios. But she always had a dream.

"I always wanted my own studio. I used to talk to my father about it

all the time, what it was going to look like, what it was going to be like. I loved dance, I loved teaching it, I loved the idea of doing it on my own and doing it my way," she said.

"I taught for a lot of people and I took things from all the different people where I taught to develop my own way of running a studio. I wanted the kids to feel like they were our family," Reilly said.

She took the plunge in 1986 and Dance 10 Performing Arts Center was born.

"I did it in a two-week period. I was teaching, working in restaurants to supplement my income, and I just looked one day and said, 'Now's the time.' I called up the American Legion, rented the space and went from there," she remembered.

Now celebrating 30 years in business, the school stayed at the American Legion building on Main Street in Old Wethersfield for six years before moving to its current home on Hillcrest Avenue at the corner of the Silas Deane Highway.

"We've slowly taken over the whole building. We started out with one room. Now we have the entire



Dancing runs in the Reilly family. Mary-Ellen Reilly of Dance 10 Performing Arts Center poses with her niece Quinn Reilly, who has already been dancing for two years.

Courtesy photos

building," Reilly said.

The move in September 1992 was also a bit of a spontaneous decision.

"We had to do renovations. It was a last-minute thing. Within one week's time, with lots of help from family and friends, we got it ready," she said.

The original space was about 800 or 1,000 square feet. Today, the studio is on multiple floors with six studio spaces, plus a waiting area, fitness area and office spaces.

Reilly said that while she still offers the classics, she's also expanded the offerings.

"We've added a lot of things. Hip hop came into the forefront. We've added modern to our curriculum, contemporary, adult classes. Then we do fitness classes, Zumba, yoga, Pilates," she said.

She also altered her parameters on how young children can start taking classes.

**"We've added a lot of things. Hip hop came into the forefront. We've added modern to our curriculum, contemporary, adult classes."**

**- Mary-Ellen Reilly**

"Where I came from, they didn't take kids until they were 3. One of my friends brought what I thought was a three-year-old. She was so grown up," Reilly said.

When her friend told her that her daughter was 2, Reilly was surprised.

"She changed my idea of what two-year-olds could do."

About 450 students take lessons at the school each year. Thousands have taken classes in the three decades the school has been open.

While for many residents, dance is just a fun hobby, others have gone on to professional careers, including Caine Keenan, who is performing with Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas; Vanessa Attardo, who is on the New England Patriots cheerleading squad; and Kayla Rodriguez, who performs with the Sonia Plumb Dance Company.

Many of the faculty have taken classes at the studio before staying on to teach.

"I grew up in these halls. I started teaching in these halls. It's the reason I became a teacher and the reason I dance. Mary Ellen is the reason I started choreographing. She pushed us to get creative and put ourselves out there and I fell in love with it because of her," said Alex

Schroll, a first grade teacher in Boston.

Schroll comes back to town to teach and choreograph for competitions and has been affiliated with the school for 16 years.

Her sister Alyssa, a senior at Wethersfield High School, is also a fan, having been involved with the studio for 15 years.

"All my friends are here. I've grown to know everyone here. I love all my teachers. It's my second home. I probably come here more often than I'm at my own house," she said.

Staff members stay for a long time too, such as Laurie Rodriguez, a faculty member who's in her 20th year. Her twin daughters both took classes at Dance 10 and are both teaching dance, one locally and one in Boston.

"It's a place for your kids to feel safe no matter what is going on in the rest of their lives – and for the parents too," she said.

Reilly also does parties and events, as well as special workshops. She's seen a number of changes

through the years, including the way students approach things.

"Kids have changed. I think things come to them very fast so I think they aren't as patient sometimes," she said. "I think they just want things quicker. If they want to find something, they Google it."

Technology has also changed from her side of things. She enjoys keeping up with former students on social media and has gone through a number of changes in how she gets her music.

"Now I can find music on iTunes, on YouTube. You used to have to buy the whole album and hope the music was good. I've gone from albums to cassettes to CDs to an iPad," she said.

One thing that's stayed the same is her approach to teaching. Her tagline is "where proper training and technique are taught with love and respect."

"It's all about the whole person. You have to be a good person first and being a great dancer is the bonus," said Reilly, who still is as enthusiastic about dance as



**Mary-Ellen Reilly of Dance 10 Performing Arts Center loves children. She is shown teaching a preschool class in 1998. She started the school 30 years ago.**

she's ever been.

"It's fun. It really is. We have a blast. I love dance. It's creative. I love the kids; they crack me up. I'm really blessed. I have no kids on my own, so they're all my kids.

"I think it's really neat that they

want to stay connected to me. We're a family; I guess that's the best word we can use. One of the moms years ago said it's a safe place to land for the kids." **WL**

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D'Esopo Funeral Chapel held its annual Thanksgiving food drive to benefit Foodshare. Both food items to fill this truck and monetary donations were gratefully accepted, as well as turkeys.

## D'Esopo food drive benefits Foodshare

Helping out at the event are, from left, George D'Esopo and Michael Klett of the funeral chapel, owner Dan D'Aprile of D&D Market, radio personality Brad Davis and James Arena-DeRosa, president and CEO of FoodShare.



Courtesy photos

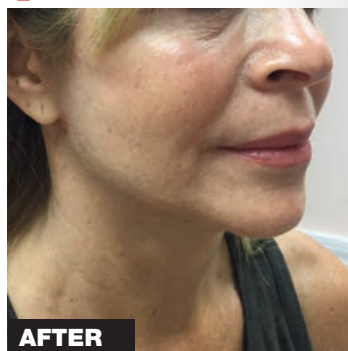
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# Editorial

## Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season

**I**t's that magical time of the year when people celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. The weather becomes a bit chilly and we start to see the snows of winter.

We all tend to rush around shopping, attending office and family gatherings, planning dinners, writing greeting cards and so much more. Did we mention shopping?

That's all fine, but this is also the season of goodwill toward others. Here are a few thoughts and suggestions to make the holidays a little bit more enjoyable for everyone.

Say hello when passing a stranger on the sidewalk. It can't hurt and you might even get a smile in return.

Drop a few dollars or your spare change into the Salvation Army kettle or give to the charity or charities of your choice. They are all heavily dependent upon holiday season giving to fund their activities throughout the year.

Offer to help a senior citizen carry heavy bags of gifts or groceries. Look over your shoulder when passing through a door and, if someone is behind you, hold it open

for that person instead of letting it close in his or her face.

Give a box or can of food to the town food bank. There are people in need who would give anything to have the kind of holiday meals most people will enjoy.

Slow down on the roads and let the other car go first. We all tend to become assertive drivers, especially when the roads are busy. Take a deep breath and let someone else have all the stress.

Find the time to listen to some music, drink some cocoa, bake some cookies, spend quality time with others. Slow the rat race of the holiday season to more of a jog or, if possible, a walk.

Take the time to enjoy the lights, decorations and music. Look for little things you can do to make other people happy. Those little things can really add up.

The weather will become cold, dark and foreboding soon enough. Let's all celebrate the actual and spiritual light of this season while we can.

Turley CT Community Publications wishes all the best this holiday season to our readers and advertisers. We'll see you again in 2017.

## Letter

### To the Editor:

For years, this town has implored its citizens to partake in the beautification of the town. The garden clubs of Wethersfield have stepped up with landscaping, maintaining small corner or pocket gardens, including planning a planting and investing time and money, energy and passion, to welcome tourists and enhance the general look of the town.

What a crying shame that without so much as a fare-thee-well, the town tears up a beautiful neighborhood garden that

had graced the intersection of Hartford Avenue, Nott Street and State Street for many years.

If a sidewalk is necessary to cross from Hartford Avenue to Cove Park on State Street, it could have been done without tearing up years of work and loving care. The sidewalk installed was mostly where asphalt was painted for a walkway and minimally reduced the garden. How pleasant it would be to walk this intersection and enjoy the beautiful garden.

The town was successful in preserving the lovely garden at

the Main Street, Church Street and Marsh Street intersection. Why not give each garden and the loyal gardeners the same treatment and respect?

What a terrible disappointment to Sheila Wells and Betty Standish, who put years of physical effort, time and money into this project, and have it removed practically overnight.

I hope this town can do a kinder and more considerate job in the future. Value the beauty and not let the car be king of the road.

— Ami Montstream

# wethersfield LIFE

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# News roundup

## Preschool program seeks peer playmates

The Wethersfield Public Schools are seeking children who will be 3 years of age as of Oct. 1, 2017 to participate in the Developmental Early Intervention Program for the 2017-2018 school year. This program includes children with developmental delays and same-aged children who act as peer playmates.

Classes are held at Webb School for 2.5 hours per day, Monday through Thursday. Children are assigned to a morning or afternoon session and parents will be notified of the assignment upon acceptance. The cost per year for this program is \$1,050.

Peer playmates will be selected through a two-tiered lottery system. The application deadline for the lottery is Feb. 28. Due to the volume of the applications received, a lottery will be held to select potential peer playmates to participate in a screening.

Those selected will be invited for a screening March 17. A second lottery will be held after the screening to fill the number of open slots. Parents interested in completing an application may call Rosanne Zdrok at 860-571-8141 to receive a registration application for the lottery.

## Women support veterans

The GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club donated numerous items to support military veterans.

They were loaded into the car by Richard Linnon, first district commander, American Legion, Department of Connecticut.

These items will be delivered to a shelter in Hartford and handed out to homeless veterans. They included 61 pounds of toiletries including toothpaste, razors, after shave and feminine products and 53 pounds of clothing including socks, underwear, sweaters, gloves and jackets.

## Parent leadership program coming

People Empowering People is coming to town. This is an innovative parent leadership training program designed to build on the unique strengths and life experiences of participants while emphasizing the connection between individual and community action.

The program is conducted by a University of Connecticut Extension trained facilitator. This is a free training class where participants can increase leadership skills and boost community networking contacts.

Participants will attend 10 weekly two-hour sessions focused on communication skills, program solving and action planning. They will then plan and complete a project that will benefit the community.

This class takes place on Thursday nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. starting Jan. 26 at the Tri-Town YMCA, 1321 Silas Deane Highway.



Women support veterans

Child care and a light dinner will be provided.

People Empowering People is offered in partnership with the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative, town of Wethersfield, Wethersfield Public Schools and Tri-Town YMCA. For details contact Kimberly Bobin at 860-721-2885 or [kimberly.bobin@wethersfieldct.gov](mailto:kimberly.bobin@wethersfieldct.gov).

## WHS band will remove Christmas trees

The Wethersfield High School marching band and instrumental

music program will remove discarded Christmas trees from local homes for a \$10 fee. This activity will serve as a fundraiser for the WHS music program.

Trees will be picked up on five consecutive Saturdays from Dec. 31 to Jan. 28. Crews of students and adult volunteers will hit the streets starting at 8 a.m.

To arrange for curbside pickup call 860-563-1227 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. or email [whsbandtreepickup@gmail.com](mailto:whsbandtreepickup@gmail.com). Indicate your name, address,

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telephone number, requested pickup date and tape the check made out to "WHS Band" to the front door or mail box.

### D'Esopo donates flags

Every year for the past decade, D'Esopo Funeral Chapel has donated new flags to fly on all town properties just prior to Veterans Day. This particular flagpole at Hartford Avenue and Nott Street is significant because the D'Esopo family donated that pole several years ago.

Shown are, from left, D'Esopo staff members George D'Esopo, David Bonola, Dan McCarthy, Noreen Guildner, Cristina Harris and Shane Breen. John Corsair, third from left, represented town government.

### WVAA Turkey Drive EMTs collect turkeys

Members of the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association participated in Foodshare's "Turkey and a 30" campaign the weekend of Nov. 19-20. They were assisted by volunteers from the First Church of Christ in Wethersfield and Wethersfield High School.

A total of 259 frozen turkeys and \$3,939 in funds was collected. Also donated was another 505 pounds of nonperishable food items. WVAA is a longtime Foodshare benefactor.

### Correction

A story in last month's Issue about the Style Company indicated that Carina Zenick, Deana Shaw and Laura Rhoades are business partners. Zenick is the sole owner of the hair salon; Shaw and Rhoades rent chair space from her. Zenick lives in town with her husband and two daughters. **WL**





## Give the Gift of Memories

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The combined police and fire department honor guard presented the colors.



Former mayor Daniel Camilliere addressed those in attendance.

## Honoring those who served

The town held its annual Veterans Day observance Nov. 11. Members of Boy Scout Troop 50 raised the flag.



Courtesy photos



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-Tami Bonnell, CEO, EXIT Realty Corp.

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*Fondly, Sharon*



# Real Estate



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# People notes



Dr. Kymberly McDonald

**Dr. Kymberly McDonald** has joined the medical staff of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center as a specialist in hospital medicine with Saint Francis Medical Group. She completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in Farmington and earned her medical degree at St. George's University Medical School in Grenada, West Indies. Dr. McDonald's clinical interests include palliative care and quality improvement.

**Montana Andrea, Mia Carbone, Molly Codeanne, Grace Marino,**

**Nicole Roode, Sarah Ritter, Annmarie Rotatori, Vanessa Slack and Mary Alistair Vidallon** earned high honors for the first marking period at Mercy High School. **Haley Lombardo, Olivia Porriello, Maggie Silbo** and **Yue "Emily" Yin** earned first honors.

**Gina Lanzano** received the Alfred and Marian LaRiviere Merit Award during the fall convocation at Western New England University. This merit scholarship is awarded to Alpha Lambda Delta members who excelled the most academically during their second year.

**Raegan Light, Deniz Camli-Saunders, Ryan Martinez, Dhanraj Bhoj and Ananya Krishnan** achieved high honors for the first marking period at the University High School of Science and Engineering, an all-honors STEM and Early College Model Magnet School on the University of Hartford campus.

**Michael Lombardi** earned a B.S. degree in architecture from Roger Williams University.

**Jay O'Brien** won third place in the Best Video Special Broadcast category

at the National Student Electronic Media Convention. He is a student at Ithaca College.

The following pupils were named students of the trimester at Silas Deane Middle School. Grade 7: **Benjamin Baby, Matthew Cheatem, Jamie Condon, Megan Doshi, Alexander Jara, Samuel Johnson, Robert Kennedy, Cristina Kiniry, Kade Lippitt, Zoe Martin, Harold Martinez, Evan Partridge, Caroline Provost, Gabriela Santos, Tomas Santos, Brianna Shamo, Elizabeth Silver, Holden Speed, Lena Uccello and Leah Weston.** Grade 8: **Camille**

**Barone, Cristin Blake, Eamon Coggins, Haylie Gomez, Madison King, Nathan Kitson, Andrew Labbe, Andrew Maher, Marcus Nieves, Hannah Ocasio, Julia Pitchell, Brian Puglielli, Elizabeth Rich, Taylor Roberts, Kaitlin Ryan, Matthew Tine, Oscar Velasco, Victor Villagra, Devon Whelchel and Zachary Zurzola.**

Sixteen members of the **Smyers family** participated in the annual Manchester Road Race on Thanksgiving Day. Many of them either live or grew up in Wethersfield. **WL**



Smyers family

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# January *calendar*

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**9 Intro to Computers:**  
**Basic**, 6:30 p.m., Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or [wethersfieldlibrary.org](http://wethersfieldlibrary.org)

**14 Saturday Cinema:**  
**"The Stratton Story,"** 1:30 p.m., Wethersfield Library

**150 Prospect Coffeehouse**, 6:30 p.m., Wethersfield United Methodist Church, 150 Prospect

St., 860-614-5158 or [tanjam@comcast.net](mailto:tanjam@comcast.net)

**15 Matt DeChamplain in Concert**, 4 p.m., Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, 200 Main St., \$10 for Wethersfield Historical Society members, \$12 for others, 860-529-7656 or [wethersfieldhistory.org](http://wethersfieldhistory.org)

**23 Intro to Computers: Email and Gmail**, 6:30 p.m.,

Wethersfield Library

**30 Intro to Computers: Internet Search**, 6:30 p.m., Wethersfield Library

**24 GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club**, 6:30 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., Newington, 860-666-4371

**28 Guided Sound**

**Meditation & Essence**, 2 p.m., registration required, Wethersfield Library

*Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at [mjahne@turleyct.com](mailto:mjahne@turleyct.com) or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.*



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# Events *spotlight*

## Holiday Light Fantasia

through Jan. 1

Goodwin Park

Maple Avenue, Hartford

[holidaylightfantasia.org](http://holidaylightfantasia.org)

The annual holiday show returns to the city park that is partially located in Wethersfield. More than one million lights are situated along a two-mile drive in more than 200 individual displays. These animations celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's and Three Kings Day. Funds raised will support Channel 3 Kids Camp. Fantasia hours are 5-9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Admission is \$15 per car. Veterans and active duty military personnel will receive free admission with appropriate identification on Dec. 27 only.



## Three Centuries of Christmas

Dec. 16-17, 5-8 p.m.

Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

211 Main St.

860-529-0612 or [webb-deane-stevens.org](http://webb-deane-stevens.org)

The annual "Three Centuries of Christmas" kicked off with the WDS Holiday Preview Party Dec. 9. Candlelight tours, with guides in period dress, will be offered Dec. 16-17. Daylight holiday tours will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 10-30, except Sundays, when the schedule is 1-4 p.m. Admission for these tours is \$12.

## Matt DeChamplain in Concert

Jan. 15, 4 p.m.

Keeney Memorial Cultural Center

200 Main St.

860-529-7656 or [wethersfieldhistory.org](http://wethersfieldhistory.org)

The Wethersfield Historical Society kicks off its Keeney Cultural Series for 2017 with a performance by this professional jazz pianist who grew up in town. He will be joined for some of the songs by his wife Atla, a jazz vocalist. This concert is supported by the Robert Allan Keeney Memorial Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Tickets are \$10 for society members and \$12 for others.

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# Slice of LIFE

photos by Lisa Brisson



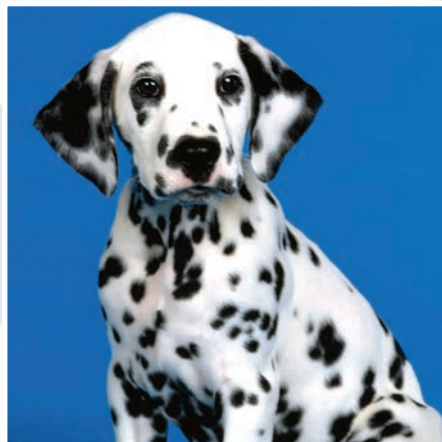
The streets of Old Wethersfield were filled to the brim with holiday joy Dec. 1 as the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce and the town of Wethersfield held the annual Holidays on Main celebration. There were cupcakes, apple cider and a wine tasting and beer garden to enjoy, as well as a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, carol singing with the Wethersfield High School chorale singers, a tree lighting, horse and wagon rides and much more.



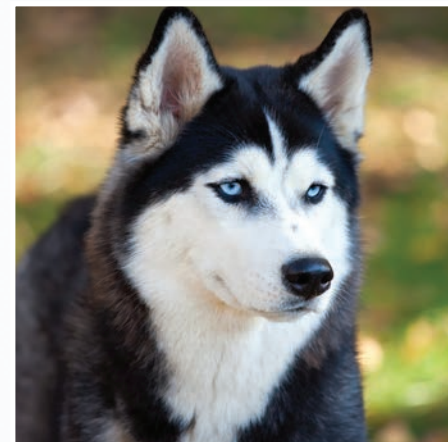
## Holidays on Main

**1.** Madelyn Sobotka, a fourth grade student at Emerson-Williams School, read her award-winning poem to the crowd. She got to hang around with Santa and Mrs. Claus during the evening. **2.** Red Onion Gardens owner Carol Griffin checks over the pine wreaths she had for sale in the Wethersfield Farmers Market. **3.** UNICO of Wethersfield warmed up the crowd with hot pretzels created by Tony Santucci and Nicholas Follacchio. **4.** The Wethersfield High School chorale singers get everyone in the holiday spirit. **5.** Two different horse and wagon rides transported visitors to Holidays on Main, hearkening back to the days when this was the primary mode of transportation in Old Wethersfield. **6.** Dave and Denise Benoit hang out with Tony Martino as they enjoy some hot pretzels from the UNICO booth. **7.** Diane McAdams, president of the chamber of commerce, addresses the crowd gathered to sing carols and watch the tree lighting at the corner of Marsh and Main streets. **8.** William Raveis Realty's Deb Raymond, Laura Maturo and Christine Morrisette pour wine samples from Carolina Wine Brands USA inside the Webb Barn. **9.** Paulina Lukaszczuk, 5, shares her Christmas wishes with Santa Claus, who was busy posing for photos with children and Mrs. Claus at the Company 1 fire station. **10.** Jaeth Rodriguez and Allison Nargi sell hot cocoa and sweets from Aroma Bistro. **11.** Hady Colebrook, 8, selects the light saber she wants from a kiosk outside the Webb Barn. **12.** Bill Covitz delighted the crowd with his ice carving of a locomotive. **13.** Chamber members Danielle Lutz, Sandra Cook and Peter O'Keefe make sure everyone is happy inside the beer garden. **14.** Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive at the tree lighting at the corner of Marsh and Main streets, courtesy of a fire engine ride from nearby Company 1. **15.** Ginger Smith chats with Sandy Whitaker and Dick Peplau about her jams and jellies at the Wethersfield Farmers Market.





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BY MARK DIXON  
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



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helps save energy and money since you're able to raise the thermostat setting.

So clearly they are beneficial during the summer, but are you getting the most out of your ceiling fan during the winter months? Instead of letting them collect dust, put them to use!

Now regardless of season, warm

air rises ... collecting near the ceiling. So when paying to heat your home, why not get that warm air back down closer to where we live? For the best efficiency when it's cold outside, the blades should travel in a clockwise direction (stand beneath the fan or lie on your bed and look up to determine which way they are spinning). Making this change

re-circulates the warm air by creating an updraft, pushing it down the walls and back into the room at the same time. This happens without creating a cooling effect.

So if you don't have a ceiling fan, perhaps consider getting one... the energy savings can be significant, year-round. **WL**



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